

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NEA-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15

TRSE-00 MBFR-04 SAJ-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /129 W

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R 051012Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2125

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

SECDEF

UNCLAS THE HAGUE 4422

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MCAP, NL

SUBJECT: REDUCTION OF TERM OF CONSCRIPT SERVICE

1. SUMMARY: IN MAGAZINE ARTICLE PUBLISHED THIS WEEK, DEFENSE MINISTER VREDLING INDICATED PLANS ARE UNDER WAY TO REDUCE PERIOD OF CONSCRIPT SERVICE FROM 16 MONTHS TO ONE YEAR. EXACT MANNER IN WHICH NEW POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED NOW UNDER STUDY, BUT DEFENSE MINISTER EXPECTS TO BE ABLE PROVIDE FULL DETAILS IN DEFENSE WHITE PAPER SCHEDULED FOR END OF YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. IN INTERVIEW WITH CONSERVATIVE WEEKLY ACCENT, DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING SAID HE INTENDED TO CUT TERM OF COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE FROM 16 MONTHS TO ONE YEAR. HE HAS ASKED COMMITTEE ON CONSCRIPTION POLICY AND MILITARY COMMANDERS TO SUBMIT THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF HIS PROPOSAL IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE NOTED THAT FINAL PLAN APPROVED WILL BE DISCUSSED WITHIN NATO.

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3. IN ARTICLE IN VOLKSKRANT OCTOBER 4, WHICH OBVIOUSLY

BASED ON BACK GROUND SESSION AT MOD, IT WAS NOTED THAT TWO OPTIONS WERE BEING CONSIDERED: (A) NO REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF MILITARY NOW IN ACTIVE SERVICE. SINCE THIS WOULD NECESSITATE LARGER NUMBERS OF INDIVIDUALS BEING CALLED UP EACH YEAR, IT IS ANTICIPATED THIS OPTION WOULD COST THE DUTCH AT LEAST 140 MILLION GULDERS; (B) CONSIDERABLY LOWER NUMBER OF SERVICE MEN ON ACTIVE DUTY BUT ADDITIONAL NUMBER WHO WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE CALL-UP. THIS SECOND OPTION WOULD RESULT IN DECREASE IN DEFENSE EXPENDITURES AND WOULD BE IN ACCORD WITH PRINCIPLES OF DUTCH GOVERNMENT.

4. VOLKSKRANT REPORTS REDUCED TERM OF COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE WILL BE INTRODUCED GRADUALLY. THE 12-MONTH TERM WOULD MOST LIKELY TAKE EFFECT IN MID-1974. AT THAT TIME A CHOICE WOULD BE MADE BETWEEN EITHER APPLYING THE NEW METHOD TO ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL JOINING THE SERVICE AT THAT PERIOD, OR INTRODUCING THE NEW LENGTH OF SERVICE IN STAGES, EITHER BY CATEGORY OF MILITARY PERSONNEL OR BY UNIT.

5. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF DEFENSE POLICY OF NEW GOVERNMENT AND ACTIONS TAKEN BY NEIGHBORING GOVERNMENTS TO REDUCE PERIOD OF CONSCRIPT SERVICE, IT WAS ALWAYS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE ONE-YEAR CONSCRIPTION PERIOD WAS INTRODUCED. REDUCTION IN CONSCRIPTION TIME HAS SUPPORT OF BOTH LABOR PARTY AND DEFENSE EXPERT OF CATHOLIC PEOPLES' PARTY, GENERAL VAN ELSSEN, WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF SECOND CHAMBER DEFENSE COMMITTEE. END COMMENT. TANGUY

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